

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-13. (canceled)

14. (currently amended) A process for joining the ends of hollow metal section strips or the ends of a hollow metal section strip which has been bent into a spacer frame for insulating glass panes to one another by butt welding, comprising the steps of:

forming an edge on at least one surface of each of the ends to be joined to one another, each said edge extending over a width of said surface, each said edge is set back relative to a respective face surface of the ends;

placing a hygroscopic material into each of the hollow metal section strips;

placing respective ends of a stopper element into each of the ends of the hollow metal section strip to be joined to one another to prevent the hygroscopic material from leaking out;

placing the respective face surface of the ends against one another;

moving the ends toward one another during the welding process until the edges touch one another; and

stopping the welding process as soon as the edges touch one another.

15. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein the edges are produced by forming steps.

16. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein the edges are produced by forming grooves.

17. (currently amended) The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein the edges are produced by cutting metal from the walls of the hollow metal section strips.

18. (currently amended) The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein the edges extend over an entire height of the side surfaces of the hollow metal section strips.

19. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 14, wherein the metal hollow section strips are aluminum.

20. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 14, further comprising the step of placing insulating glass on said surface, said surface being inside with respect to the insulating glass.

21. (currently amended) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein the step of forming an edge on at least one surface comprises forming an edge on a top surface and both side surfaces of the hollow metal section strips, said top surface being the inside surface with respect to the insulating glass.

22. (currently amended) A process for joining first and second ends of a hollow metal section strip to one another to

produce a spacer for insulating glass, the process comprising the steps of:

producing an edge which extends over a width of only one surface of each said first and second ends to be joined to one another, so that an opposing surface is free from any edge, each said edge being laterally outwardly displaced with respect to a respective face of said first and second ends;

placing respective ends of a stopper element into each of the ends of the hollow metal section strip to be joined to one another;

placing the respective faces against one another;

moving the first and second ends towards one another while butt welding the first and second ends together until each said edge touches one another;

stopping said butt welding as soon as each said edge touches one another.

23. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 22, wherein each said edge touches one another, so that said surface is planar.

24. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 22, wherein each said edge is produced by forming steps.

25. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 22, wherein each said edge is produced by forming grooves.

26. (previously presented) The process as claimed in claim 22, wherein each said edge is produced by removing metal from said one surface.